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Canada Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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# Memorandum

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Royal Canadian Mounted Police



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MEMORANDUM ON THE  
ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, formerly the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, is the Force upon which the Dominion Government relies for the execution of Federal legislation; it also is available for the assistance of the Provincial Governments in the preservation of law and order.

The acquisition of the Western prairies by the newly formed Dominion brought to the attention of the Government of the day the problem created by its native population. The several Indian tribes at this time were powerful and prosperous, but were being demoralized by liquor-sellers who came from the Western States; and in addition a certain amount of tribal warfare took place, of a nature to discourage settlement by white people. To cope with this situation, a military constabulary, known as the Northwest Mounted Police, was formed in 1873 by the first Commissioner, Colonel (afterwards Major General Sir George) French. This Force, only 300 strong at the outset, in 1874 marched right across the Territories from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, a portion returning to winter in Manitoba, the entire march being upwards of 2,000 miles through country which in part was unknown; the Force so impressed the Indians that a series of Treaties was concluded, and the Government was enabled to assume control of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Country. In the period from 1876 to 1881 brilliant service was rendered in controlling the Sioux Indians who had entered the Northwest Territories after the defeat of General Custer.

The prairie country underwent several phases of development very rapidly. When the Mounted Police entered it the Indians were powerful and had ample means of subsistence. A few years later the sudden disappearance of the buffalo reduced them to beggary, and it became necessary to provide them with the means of livelihood; had there been no strong and just authority in the land, the Indians would have been driven by starvation to warfare against the whites. A little later the building of the Canadian Pacific created a new problem, the appearance on the prairies of thousands of labourers, many of them rough men, trained elsewhere to dislike



and fear of the Indians; here again the influence of the Mounted Police kept the peace between these dangerous elements. There succeeded the eras of the rancher and the farmer, and in later years large cities with their special problems have sprung up in what within the span of one man's life was open prairie; through the entire period, with the exception of the slight and short-lived Riel Rebellion of 1885, perfect order has prevailed. The principle throughout has been to provide for each development in advance. New-comers found on arrival a strong, efficient and incorruptible administration, and each community could address itself to material problems with no difficulties as to the preservation of order or the enforcement of the law. At the outset the Mounted Police constituted a considerable proportion of the administration of the settlements; as conditions developed local governments were erected and these assumed more and more of the task of administration, until the whole of the prairies south of the sixtieth parallel had their own Provincial Governments, which undertook the the enforcement of the law as fully as those of Eastern Canada. Within a comparatively few years the sudden opening of the Yukon afforded an object lesson of the value of the Force, which preserved perfect order among adventurous miners, some of whom were inclined to turbulence, and over an enormous area in which travel was difficult and the conditions of life rigorous. The precautions taken in connection with the discovery of oil on the Mackenzie River afford a recent example of the services which the Force can render.

In addition to discharging police duties and undertaking much executive work - such as guarding against prairie fires in the early days, visiting lonely settlers in severe winters, etc. - the Force had their share of military duties. The original march across the prairies was a military task, performed in a military manner; they bore an active part in the fighting of the Riel Rebellion; they sent a considerable number of troops to the South African War, and in the Great War they furnished two squadrons for service overseas, one in France and one in Siberia.

When Alberta and Saskatchewan were constituted Provinces in 1905, an arrangement was made whereby the Force continued to discharge its former functions, each Province making a contribution








1915  
towards defraying its cost. This was continued until ~~1905~~, when the two provinces assumed control of the ordinary enforcement of law and order. The sphere of the Royal North West Mounted Police (the honourable prefix "Royal" came in 1905) then took the form of ordinary police work in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, and elsewhere of enforcing strictly Federal Statutes. The latter duty was assuming increasing proportions, the constant extension of Governmental activities and the growing complexity of social conditions making it clear that the Dominion Government needed an executive agency available in all Provinces. In 1918 as a tentative measure the Royal Northwest Mounted Police were made responsible for the enforcement of Federal legislation in the whole of Western Canada, that is, west of Port Arthur and Fort William. This meant extending the operations of the Force to British Columbia and to Manitoba and that part of Western Ontario between Manitoba and Lake Superior. Soon after this was effected the serious labour troubles associated with the General Strike of 1919 brought out the value of such an auxiliary of the law, the riot which marked the strike in Winnipeg being suppressed by the Force with a minimum of bloodshed. Soon afterwards it was decided to establish one Federal Police Force for the whole of Canada, by amalgamating the Dominion Police with the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. To the Dominion Police it now is necessary to give a glance.

For many years Canadian Governments have felt the need for a highly trained and disciplined constabulary under the orders of the central authorities. As long ago as during the administration of Lord Durham authority was taken by an Ordinance for the establishment of such a Force, and a few years later, in 1846, disorders among the navvies employed in enlarging the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals caused additional legislation to be passed, and a small Force of Mounted Police to be raised and kept up for a time; later still, in 1849 the Elgin riots in Montreal caused another such Force to be authorized and raised. A third accasion for the use of Governmental Police was afforded by the Fenian Raids, and the Force then employed was given permanent existence about 1868, as the Dominion Police, for the purpose of guarding the Government Building at Ottawa. Small at first, numbering little over a dozen, this Force gradually increased until the beginning of 1920 it num-



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bered about 140 of all ranks; its duties, while principally confined to Ottawa, were extended to the guarding of the dockyards at Halifax and Esquimalt, and it developed anti-counterfeiting and fingerprint services which have proved of value.

During the great war the duties of the Dominion Police expanded. They had charge of the secret service work of the Dominion outside of the Provinces where the Royal Northwest Mounted Police operated, and the enforcement of the Military Service Act was entrusted to them for the whole of Canada, a special branch of the Force being formed this purpose. In 1918, when the Royal Northwest Mounted Police was given the task of enforcing Federal Laws in Western Canada, it was arranged that the Dominion Police should be responsible for the same class of work east of Port Arthur. This arrangement proved temporary, the decision being to create a single Federal Constabulary.

Accordingly, on 1st February 1920, the amalgamation took place. The Royal Northwest Mounted Police became the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and absorbed the Dominion Police, the uniformed members of the latter body constituting "A" Division of the combined Force. The headquarters, for many years at Regina, have been moved to Ottawa. There now are squadrons at Regina and Vancouver, in addition to numerous detachments. New divisions have been established in Western Ontario, Eastern Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, and detachments opened in places like Sault Ste Marie, Sarnia, Windsor, Bridgeburg Niagara Falls, Haileybury, Senneterre (in Northern Quebec) Quebec City and Phillipsburg. Time of course is required to establish in Eastern Canada as complete a system as obtains in the West.

It already has been stated that the Force has the duty of enforcing Federal statutes. The list of those probably will surprise many by its length. Those which the Royal Canadian Mounted Police must assist in putting into force are as follows:-

Air Board Act.

Animal Contagious Diseases Act.

Bank Act.





Canada Shipping Act.  
Canada Temperance Act.  
Canadian Temperance Act (to aid Provincial Legislation.)  
Chinese Immigration Act.  
Customs Act.  
Dominion Lands Act.  
Explosives Act.  
Fisheries Act.  
Regulations, General.  
    Prince Edward Island  
    Nova Scotia  
    New Brunswick  
    Quebec  
    Ontario  
    Manitoba  
    Saskatchewan  
    Alberta  
    British Columbia  
    Yukon Territory  
Food and Drugs Act.  
Fugitive Offenders Act.  
Government Railways Act.  
Identification of Criminals.  
Immigration Act.  
Indian Act.  
Industrial Disputes Investigation Act.  
Inland Revenue Act.  
Leprosy Act.  
Migratory Birds Act.  
Militia Act.  
Naturalization Act.  
Naval Act.  
North West Game Act.  
North West Territories Act.  
Oleomargarine Act.  
Opium and Narcotic Drug Act.  
Patent Medicines Act.  
Penitentiaries Act.  
Post Office Act.  
Prisons and Reformatories Act.  
Public Works Act.  
Public Works Health Act.





Quarantine Act.  
Radiotelegraph Act.  
Railway Act.  
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act.  
Special War Revenue Act.  
Ticket of Leave Act.

It will be seen that there is much work to be done of a character which may not come generally into public notice. An example of what the Force is required to do is afforded by the energetic steps which have been taken to put down the traffic in narcotic drugs. From one end of the Dominion to the other the operations of this pernicious underground commerce have been investigated, and a great number of Offenders have been brought to justice — professional men and merchants as well as creatures of the underworld.

While these new problems are being met, the Force is steadily pushing farther and farther into the wilder parts of the Dominion. It long has maintained a post on Herschel Island, in the Arctic Ocean near the mouth of the Mackenzie river; it recently erected posts at Aklavik in the delta of the Mackenzie river; Tree river, on the shores of Coronation Gulf; Cambridge Bay, on Victoria Island; Port Burwell, on the southern side of Hudson Strait; Ponds Inlet on Baffin Island, and Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island. The Western Coast of Hudson Bay long has been patrolled. The Eskimos now are being brought under control and guidance, as the Indians have been, this duty involving long and arduous journeys through the blizzards of the Arctic winter. Thus on the shores of the Arctic as well as along the international boundary the Force now is upholding the law.



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